HU2820 Communication and Culture
Summer 2002
P. Sotirin, psotiri@mtu.edu, Walker 345 (M-Th 2-3) x. 73264

Required texts

Rationale
Consumer culture dominates contemporary existence in the Western world. The readings in this course will show you how consumption and communication are bound together. We will look at advertising, fashion, and globalization as sites of consumption and communication. The course will offer conceptual resources for understanding the power of communication as a part of and a resistance to consumer culture.

Objectives
1. to understand the concept of consumer culture
2. to analyze consumption as communicative
3. to critically reflect on the implications of consumer culture

Requirements
• You must complete all the assignments listed below for a final grade or make arrangements with me to complete missing assignments.
• Plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students; I expect careful documentation of any sources, especially electronic sources.
• Please attend class; after three absences, your grade will be lowered.

I encourage you to see me regarding any particular aspect of your involvement in the course. In addition, accommodations will be made for particular needs in accord with the following university policy statement: “MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action office (3310).”

Grading
3 essays (30% each); Presentation (10%)
Schedule

7/1    Course introduction
7/2    Dress codes, Part 1
7/3    Dress codes, Part 2
7/8    Dress codes, Part 3
7/9    Dress codes, Part 4
7/10   Dress codes, Part 4
7/11   Dress codes, Part 5
7/15   Essay #1 due
7/16   Advertising, Debates
7/17   Advertising and Media
7/18   Advertising and Media
7/22   Advertising and Media
7/23   Semiotics
7/24   Content analysis
7/25   Goods
7/29   Essay #2 due
7/30   Advertising and Politics
7/31   McDonaldization
8/1    McDonaldization
8/5    McDonaldization
8/6    McDonaldization
8/7    McDonaldization
8/8    Essay #3 due

Due dates:
7/15   Essay #1: Analysis of dress in a subcultural setting (can be submitted in audio, visual, or textual format; visuals required)
7/29   Essay #2: Analysis of ads (semiotic or content analysis)
8/8    Essay #3: McDonaldization issues